



Janet Lynch
Pownal, representing myself

From: Janet Lynch, Pownal, representing myself

To: Senator Mark Lawrence, Chair, Representative Seth Berry, Chair, and other Members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

Date: 24 May 2021

re: Please vote LD 1708, "An Act To Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Nonprofit Utility, To Deliver Lower Rates, Reliability and Local Control for Maine Energy Independence," OUGHT TO PASS.

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and other esteemed Members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

I write to you today to urge you, in the very strongest terms possible, to SUPPORT LD 1708, An Act To Create the Pine Tree Power Company, a Nonprofit Utility, To Deliver Lower Rates, Reliability and Local Control for Maine Energy Independence," and I am particularly grateful to Representative Berry for introducing the bill. I only regret that I was not able to testify in person, but respectfully submit my written testimony here.

It is high time that Maine people declared their energy independence from the foreign-owned utilities, which serve our state very poorly indeed. It is telling that of those who testified on this bill in last week's public hearing, the vast majority (most of them ordinary Maine citizens) testified in support of the bill, while the very few individuals who testified against it had professional or financial ties to the foreign-owned energy utility companies which currently hold monopolies in our state. These companies have poor service records, regularly overcharge their customers, promote environmentally destructive and unpopular projects, and generally put the interests of their foreign stockholders above the interests of their captive Maine customers. Yet their executives claim that Mainers would risk poor service if we as a state chose to declare our electricity independence from CMP and other foreign-owned utilities. The fact is, we already suffer from poor electricity service delivered by unaccountable, foreign-owned firms. Maine people demand better, and that's why so many of us want a locally-owned, locally accountable electricity company which answers not to foreign stockholders, but directly to the People of Maine.

I have written to members of the Legislature on multiple previous occasions outlining my varied, deep concerns regarding Maine's foreign-owned electricity delivery systems. I have long argued, in my capacity as a private citizen who cares about our state's electricity supply, independence, and environment, that the current situation is untenable. I have traveled to Augusta on numerous occasions to testify in support of locally-generated, locally-controlled electricity supply, because it makes sense for Maine.

In 2019, when I was on vacation in Glasgow, Scotland, I happened to pass a building emblazoned with the words "SCOTTISH POWER" with a logo identical to that which appears on the monthly Central Maine Power bill (photo attached). I was initially shocked by this, but I shouldn't have been; both Scottish Power and CMP (through the intermediary corporation Avangrid) are wholly-owned subsidiaries of the Spanish-owned transnational energy giant Iberdrola. (Please see attachments.) In addition to Spain, the UK and the United States, Iberdrola does business in Brazil (Neoenergia), Mexico, Germany, Portugal, Italy and France. According to Wikipedia, Iberdrola has a workforce of 34,000 with assets in excess of €113bn, and it achieved a turnover of €35bn and a net profit of €3bn in 2018.

I should also point out here that Maine Natural Gas is also owned, through Avangrid, by Iberdrola. So much for Central Maine Power's current claims that it is interested in replacing fossil fuels with what it claims are carbon-neutral projects. Both CMP and Maine Natural Gas, like all of Iberdrola's and Avangrid's subsidiaries, are primarily

interested in creating profits for the stockholders of their parent corporation Iberdrola, the largest of whom are, in order of investment significance, Qatari, Norwegian and Spanish.

It should be crystal clear from these facts that neither CMP nor Maine Natural Gas nor any other subsidiary of the powerful, multinational, Spanish-owned Iberdrola is interested in its Maine customers as anything more than cash cow cogs in the enormous wheel of Iberdrola's global holdings. Add to that the fact that CMP customers suffer from some of the worst electricity service records in the nation, and it is clear to this voter and CMP customer that Maine can do MUCH better.

Maine has a burgeoning renewable fuels industry which has been fought tooth and nail at every step by representatives for the foreign-owned CMP. Because of regulations governing electricity supply companies in this state, such companies can only make money by building infrastructure, leading to such boondoggles as the environmentally disastrous and deeply unpopular proposed CMP corridor project. As you know, similar proposals were rejected in other states due to environmental and other concerns. In the past, I have argued to this Committee that it would be hard to imagine a more expensive, environmentally destructive and circuitous route than that proposed by CMP for that project. But when you consider that building infrastructure is how CMP/ Avangrid/ Iberdrola make money, then the reasoning is clear. The problem is, that kind of reasoning doesn't help Mainers, and only enriches the primarily Qatari, Norwegian and Spanish stockholders of Iberdrola and its many global subsidiaries. And of course I haven't even mentioned the foreign-government owned Quebec Hydro, but that company is also interested primarily in enriching itself and its stockholders at Maine's expense, and it is spending money to influence Maine voters on state issues which should be free of foreign influence.

As a citizen of Maine, I am hopeful when I see the wonderful, innovative work in the renewable electricity generation field being done by local Maine businesses, yet at the same time, I am deeply angered that these local companies, and by extension Maine's people, economy and environment, are being stifled and sacrificed so that far-flung foreign investors, who care nothing for Maine's people, economy and environment, can profit from their Maine subsidiaries in the energy sector. I am tired of being a tiny customer-cog in the global wheel of Iberdrola's gigantic energy portfolio.

Maine earned its political independence from Massachusetts over 200 years ago. Isn't it time Maine declared its energy independence from the enormous, distant, Spanish multinational corporation Iberdrola and others? Maine is a state, not a colony, and our electricity supply should reflect that. Maine people are perfectly capable of running our own energy utilities - utilities which will work by and for the people of Maine, rather than far-flung stockholders in foreign capitals.

Maine urgent needs energy independence, and an electricity utility company which works FOR its customers. Electricity is a commodity which is essential to modern life, and it should be owned, regulated and controlled by the people who use it, not distant foreign investors.

PLEASE VOTE, LD 1708 OUGHT TO PASS.

Sincerely,

Janet Lynch, Pownal